

John Randolph to Andrew Jackson, November 8, 1831, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

JOHN RANDOLPH TO JACKSON.

Charlotte C. H., Va. , November 8, 1831.

. . . . It is in vain, my dear Sir, to disguise from you or from myself, that there has been a great defection on the part of your supporters in Virginia within the last twelve or fifteen months. Men whom I left your friends I now find not only opposed to *you* , but supporters of Mr Clay—others who were lukewarm, or indifferent, or undecided, have taken sides against the Administration, and in no one instance have I met with defection from the cause of the coalition. One of my firmest and best friends, a man of great wealth, intel[ligence] and influence, I found to my surprise and chagrin an adherent of the Coalition. It is true that he is no longer a resident or, I believe, freeholder of the district, but he is separated from it only by the River James, has married children settled in it and possesses a great and (from his character for intelligence and integrity, as well as his large property) a deserved interest not only here but in the adjoining districts and the City of Richmond. It is true that his conversion to “the American System” and to the cause of it's great supporter, Mr Clay, has 26 been subsequent to his establishment of a cotton Factory. But there are other instances of a similar sort, where there is no such bias as in this case.

It is due to you also to inform you, that several of your warmest supporter's at the late election, who are your unshaken friends at this time and cannot be detached from you have declared to me in private and in confidence their dissatisfaction at some of the persons, who are believed to be much in your confidence and some of the appointments

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(particularly of newspaper editors) which you have made. Now as I am entirely ignorant of the characters of these persons, it is impossible for me to form, or to express an opinion: but I cannot conceal from myself and ought not to conceal from you, that a very numerous body of your most respectable and staunch supporters do privately regret, and deeply too, that certain persons, whom I shall not more plainly designate, have, as they believe, habitual access to your person and, as your enemies allege, much influence over your decisions. No great captain ever wished to be deceived as to the real state of his own effective force or that of the enemy. And did I deem so unworthily of you, my dear Sir, as to imagine for an instant, that the truth, however disagreeable, would be less acceptable to you than a flattering, but false representation of the state of your and our affairs and prospects, this letter (as well as some others) would never have been written. . . .

Travelling (partly in a carriage and partly on horseback) has expelled so much poison from my entrails that I have gained strength enough to purpose meeting the freeholders of Buckingham next Monday (14th) at their quarterly court; and as I hear dreadful accounts of Florida, I am half tempted to give up my proposed hybernation there. I would go on to Washington but for a reason that will suggest itself to you without my stating it. Referring you to a letter to the Secty of State of this date, I remain, Dear Sir, faithfully your's

[P. S.] Extract of a letter from N. Macon of N. Carolina¹ to J. R. of R. dated Buck Spring Octr. 28. 1831. recd. this day (Novr. 8th.)

¹ Nathaniel Macon (1757–1837), M. C. 1791–1815, senator 1815–1828.

“I purposely omit touching on the letters addressed to the people by the ex-secretaries because I care nothing about their contents. Jackson I hope, unless he changes some of his opinions for the worse, will be again elected. Although I do not approve all his opinions, he is the best we can get.”